

ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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IOWA 2002-2003 WINTER FUEL PRICE FORECAST

DES MOINES — Iowa household heating fuel expenditures are projected to rise 19 to 45 percent this winter compared to last year, depending on the type of heating fuel used, according to DNR energy analysts.

“A forecast for colder temperatures, along with national declines in heating fuel inventories, will have a marked impact on fuel prices this winter,” said David Downing, a DNR energy analyst.

The price rise appears higher than normal due to last year’s lower-than-average prices.

From a national standpoint, most heating fuel inventories have been above normal levels for most of the year, but are now beginning to decline. This has led to a rise in prices. Additionally, the price of crude oil is projected to rise 58 percent above last year’s prices. Heating oil and propane, two significant fuels used for heating fuel in Iowa, are refined from petroleum.

Rising heating fuel costs also are supported by a 10-percent reduction in U.S. natural gas refining capacity. Lower drilling and exploration activity, increased demand from electric generation facilities, and rising demand in the industrial sector are all pinching natural gas supplies.

Natural Gas Outlook

Iowa households relying on natural gas may pay up to \$114 more this winter, a 19 percent increase. Natural gas prices have been trending higher as natural gas storage levels decline. Early weather-related demand and increased use from an improving industrial sector have outpaced new supply. About 65 percent of Iowans use natural gas for heating.

Propane Gas Outlook

The 14 percent of Iowans using propane for home heating will face a 22 percent rise in fuel costs, as much as \$195 during the heating season for average-sized households. Propane prices are expected to begin their seasonal climb as weather-related demand increases in early November and crop drying returns to normal levels. Propane prices are being pushed higher by growing demand from the petrochemical industry, the largest consumer of propane. Propane demand in the Midwest region is projected to be 12 percent higher this heating season.

Heating Oil Outlook

Heating oil prices are expected to jump 45 percent this year. The 5 percent of Iowa households using heating oil could pay up to \$290 more this season because of the price hike. Heating oil prices are trending higher because of rising crude oil prices and reduced refinery production.

For more information about state and national fuel costs, contact David Downing with the DNR at (515) 281-4876, or by e-mail at David.Downing@dnr.state.ia.us. Or contact Jennifer Moehlmann at (515) 281-8518, or by e-mail at Jennifer.Moehlmann@dnr.state.ia.us.

DNR PROPOSES MASTER MATRIX, LIVESTOCK RULE CHANGES

DES MOINES – The DNR is seeking public comment on proposed rule changes that could affect livestock and poultry operations. The rule package includes the “master matrix,” designed for use by counties when evaluating the locations of large confinement operations.

“The master matrix was developed through the consensus of ten different groups representing statewide interests ranging from county government to commodity groups to universities and environmental groups,” said Robin Praisner, the DNR representative to the committee.

“We are particularly seeking public input on parts of the matrix that the committee did not reach consensus on – the minimum point total for a passing score and whether or not producers need to have a minimum score in three subcategories: air quality, water quality and community impacts,” she added.

Other proposed rules would change minimum separation distances for land application of manure and location of confinement feeding operations, define the process counties would follow for using the matrix or making comments, and modify the construction permit review process.

DNR is proposing these rules changes to comply with Senate File 2293 enacted by Governor Vilsack on April 29, 2002.

The DNR will accept written suggestions or comments on the proposed amendments until December 6, 2002. Send comments to Robin Puisner, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034; or fax (515)281-8895.

The DNR will accept oral and written comments at public hearings broadcast through the Iowa Communications Network from 1 to 4 p.m. on Dec. 5. The DNR has increased the ICN sites from nine to 17 because of considerable interest in the proposed rules. ICN site locations and the reservation process will be announced soon.

Check the DNR website at

<http://www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/epd/wastewtr/feedlot/feedlt.htm> for more information and a copy of the proposed rules and matrix. Or, call (515) 281- 8693 to receive a copy.

For more information, call Robin Puisner at (515) 281-8690.

DNR ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

DES MOINES — The DNR has taken the following enforcement actions. Responsible parties have 30 days to appeal the charges or 60 days to pay the penalty.

- Fran Oil Co. of Council Bluffs was ordered to pay a \$3,500 penalty, to cease future record keeping violations, maintain compliance with all underground storage tank system operation and maintenance regulations at its six locations and to conduct monthly leak detection inspections, submitting the reports to the DNR's Atlantic field office each month for a year.
- Luella Schell and the Schell Family Partnership of Boone, was ordered to pay a \$5,000 penalty; to properly dispose of all materials including waste tires, white goods, solid waste and salvageable metal on property it owns within 60 days; and to submit a soil and groundwater contamination evaluation and clean-up plan prepared by a certified groundwater professional within 60 days.
- Lewis Contracting Co. of Red Oak was ordered to pay a \$3,500 penalty; obtain and maintain required storm water discharge permits; develop and comply with adequate pollution prevention plans at all times to prevent sediment runoff; and inspect and repair as needed erosion and sediment control devices weekly and within 24 hours after each rainfall event of a half an inch or more of precipitation.
- Finley Mondia of West Chester was ordered to pay a \$6,430 penalty, \$780 in delinquent fees and to perform required site assessments relating to underground storage tanks.

For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.